

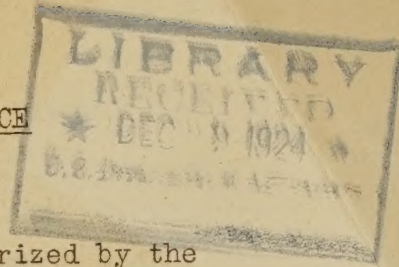
Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
Ag 81 Rap

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Washington, D. C.

REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL RADIO CONFERENCE
Chicago, Illinois, December 4, 1924



The Agricultural Radio Conference which was authorized by the late Secretary of Agriculture, Hon. Henry C. Wallace, and called by the Director of Extension Work, Mr. C. W. Warburton, was held in Chicago, Ill., on Thursday, December 4, 1924. The purpose of this conference was to discuss the agricultural use of the radio in all its phases, including weather, crop, and markets reports, educational material, correlation of agricultural radio programs, etc. The conference was called to order at 10 a. m. by Mr. Warburton, who acted as chairman.

The program of the meeting was as follows:

Morning Session

- 10:00 a.m. Use of the Radio in the Extension Work of the Agricultural Colleges. Dean H. Umberger, Director of the Extension Service of the Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kan.
- 10:50 a.m. Dissemination of Crop and Market Reports by Radio. J. Clyde Marquis, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
- 11:45 a.m. Weather Forecasts by Radio. E. B. Calvert, in Charge Forecast Division, Weather Bureau, U. S. Dept. Agr., Washington, D. C.

Afternoon Session

- 1:30 p.m. Distribution of Agricultural News by Radio. E. S. Bayard, Editor the National Stockman & Farmer, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 2:15 p.m. Use of Agricultural Material by Commercial Broadcasting Stations. C. W. Horne, Supt. Radio Operations, Westinghouse Elect. & Mfg. Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 2:50 p.m. Use of the Radio by Farmers. H. R. Kibler, American Farm Bureau Federation, Chicago, Ill.
- 3:10 p.m. The Practical Application of Broadcasting to the Needs of Agriculture. Prof. C. M. Jansky, Jr., Radio Engineering Department, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

This program was carried out practically as scheduled. Discussion of most of the topics was continued by one or more persons experienced in the particular field, after which opportunity was offered for general discussion.

Dean H. Umberger of the Kansas State Agricultural College outlined the work which the college has been doing in an educational way with radio. He stated that in 1923, through the use of a privately owned station some 20 miles distant, they broadcasted 12 extension courses on various subjects in which 967 people, both inside and outside of the State of Kansas, were enrolled. Of this number 311 took the examinations scheduled at the close of the course. These courses lasted for 10 weeks.

At the beginning of the 1924 session of the college the extension service offered 27 courses in agriculture, agricultural engineering, home economics, and general science. An attractive catalogue of these courses was prepared and distributed. The enrollments in these courses to December 1 total 830, and additional enrollments are expected during the remainder of the course. Director Umberger stated that both the college authorities and the farmers in Kansas were well sold on the radio extension plan.

The use of radio in extension work was further discussed by Dean W. C. Coffey of the College of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota and Assistant Director of Extension P. C. Taff of Iowa State College.

Dean Coffey explained how the need of a real program of agricultural information by radio had impressed itself upon the college authorities, and how the idea of developing a truly efficient broadcasting station had grown. The committee of people of the Twin Cities, of which Dean Coffey is the chairman, has a real interest in agricultural progress. They have undertaken the job of supervising the agricultural programs of the new station WCCO which is supported by the business interests of the Twin Cities.

Mr. Taff spoke of the work that has been going on at the Iowa State College. He told of the college station WOI and the broadcasting of extension material and of weather, crop and market reports. One of the points raised by Mr. Taff was that it has been a problem for the extension service to obtain regular and dependable material for broadcasting. While the Great Lakes Naval Station, NAJ, was sending out the market reports by radio telegraph they had a satisfactory service on that class of material. Since the Navy service was discontinued they have used the CND service of the telegraph companies and such other reports as they could get from different sources.

The second number on the program was an address by J. Clyde Marquis, Director of Information of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Mr. Marquis discussed the history and present status of the distribution of crop and market reports by radio as it has been worked out by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. He stated that the first attempt along this line was the result of contacts between amateur operators made by Harold Wheeler, the son of Mr. W. A. Wheeler, formerly

in charge of the Division of Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The first Government experiments were conducted by the Department of Commerce in December, 1920, at which time market reports were broadcast in the evening by radio telegraph from an experimental set at the Bureau of Standards. During 1921 and 1922 the use of radio telegraph was developed in cooperation with both the Post Office and Navy Departments. The stations owned by these two government departments were used to transmit the government market reports over large areas of the country. However, because the reports were broadcast in the telegraphic code they were available only to the radio amateurs who were able to receive in code. When radio telephone broadcasting became an assured fact the Department of Agriculture saw in it a wonderful means for the wide distribution of its crop and market reports and a radio market news service was begun.

In January, 1922, nine broadcasting stations were licensed to broadcast market reports. This number increased very rapidly until in January, 1924, there were 86 stations broadcasting crop and market reports from different parts of the country.

One of the difficulties encountered by the radio market news service was that of getting the reports into the hands of a large number of stations. Many of these stations were located at points not touched by the leased wire system of the Bureau, and means had to be devised by which the reports could be carried to these outlying distributing points. This was accomplished principally by land wire telegraph and radio telegraph. The further extension of the leased wire system to the Pacific Coast and to the Southwest has greatly extended the distribution of government market and crop reports by radio.

The dissemination of crop and market reports by radio was further discussed by Mr. J. Austen Hunter, State Marketing Agent, Markets and Warehouse Division, Austin, Tex., and by Mr. B. B. Jones, State Department of Markets, Madison, Wis.

"Weather Forecasts by Radio" was discussed by Mr. E. B. Calvert, in charge of the Forecast Division of the United States Weather Bureau. Mr. Calvert stated that he had been in the service of the Weather Bureau for more than a quarter of a century and had seen all the development of the use of radio as applied to weather reports since the time that Signor Marconi began his experiments with wireless telegraphy. At the time that wireless telegraphy was proved to the world by Marconi, the Weather Bureau had been transferred from the direction of the Signal Corps of the U. S. Army to the Department of Agriculture. Those in charge early saw the possibilities of using wireless both for obtaining weather reports and for distributing them. In 1900, Prof. R. A. Fessenden of the University of Western Pennsylvania was secured to take charge of the experimental work in radio transmission and much research work was done. Finally an experiment in transmission was arranged between the mainland and Roanoke Island off the North Carolina coast. Here regular schedules of transmission were

maintained, proving to those in charge that this method was a workable one and capable of wide use. From then on the Weather Bureau did considerable work with the radio until 1904, when further research was discontinued by executive order. This, however, did not prevent the Weather Bureau from utilizing the results of wireless experiments as a means of extending its work.

The weather reports were broadcast first by radio telegraph from the stations of the Navy and War Departments. Later, the Air Mail radio stations of the Post Office Department have broadcast them and they have aided very materially in safeguarding navigation both on the sea and in the air.

With the advent of radio telephone broadcasting a more particular application of weather reports to agriculture has been made possible. A farmer living in the most remote section of the country can now get the regular daily weather reports, including storm and frost warnings. Those living near the large rivers can also secure information regarding the stage of flood water. It is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of livestock and other property have been saved by a foreknowledge of weather conditions made possible by radio broadcasting.

"The Distribution of Agricultural News by Radio" was discussed by Mr. E. S. Bayard of the National Stockman and Farmer, Pittsburgh, Pa. Mr. Bayard has been an editor of farm papers for a great many years and his knowledge of the needs of the rural population for information is unquestioned.

Located in Pittsburgh, the National Stockman and Farmer was in a position to take advantage of the invitation of the Westinghouse Company to use the veteran broadcasting station KDKA to broadcast agricultural information to farmers. The success of this piece of work, according to Mr. Bayard, has been largely due to the close personal attention that has been given to it by Mr. Frank Mullen. Mr. Bayard said that they realized that if they were going to do this work at all they must give the matter the best possible supervision, and they secured a man with agricultural editorial experience and placed him in charge. Having only this one line of work to conduct, Mr. Mullen has been able to work out a very satisfactory program of material consisting of crop and market reports, agricultural news and certain styles of entertainment which apparently are very much appreciated by the rural listeners. Radio station KDKA owned by the Westinghouse Electric & Mfg. Co., in addition to being the pioneer station of the country, is also one of the most powerful and the range of its broadcasts takes in some of the far sections of the country, as well as the West Indies and southern Canada.

The range of commodities upon which the National Stockman & Farmer has been asked to give reports covers everything from tropical fruits and coffee to hides and furs from the Canadian woods. The Stockman-Farmer

radio service has complied with as many of these requests as possible, until their service has been extended beyond the original twenty minutes allowed at 8:20 every evening. Morning and afternoon schedules are now in effect at which time the government market reports on livestock, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and hay and feed are broadcast on a regular schedule.

"One of the outstanding features of this radio service by the National Stockman and Farmer," said Mr. Bayard, "has been the opportunity of editing the material in a manner similar to that of editing material for agricultural publications." In this way they have been able to offer to the rural radio listeners a well rounded program of information in a style which is pleasing and not tiresome.

Following the discussion by Mr. Bayard, an address was given by Mr. C. W. Horne, Superintendent of Radio Operations of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, in which he discussed the relationships which had grown up between his company and the National Stockman and Farmer in Pittsburgh and the relationship between the company and the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics in Springfield, Mass., and at Chicago, Ill. He also touched on the interest which the Westinghouse Company had in securing information for broadcasting which would be beyond criticism.

Mr. Horne spoke from the standpoint of a practical radio man and from that of a company which has spent millions in the development of radio broadcasting in this country. He said that his company early realized the significance of radio to the farming population of the United States and that, although their work had been largely along technical lines, they had ever kept in mind the point of view that the greatest mission of radio broadcasting in this country is its service to American agriculture.

Mr. H. R. Kibler of the American Farm Bureau Federation delivered an address on the "Use of Radio by Farmers." Mr. Kibler described how the Farm Bureau had come to realize the potentialities of radio in reaching the American farmer with information and had made use of it in broadcasting specific agricultural information as well as material intended primarily for Farm Bureau members. He concluded his remarks by offering a plan of organization by which radio development along agricultural lines in this country might be coordinated. The plan presented by Mr. Kibler contemplated the formation of a National Agricultural Radio Council to be supported by a membership among the principal broadcasting stations desirous of having agricultural material for distribution, and also those agencies in which such information might originate. Mr. Kibler stated that some of the farm organizations had already given favorable consideration to this plan and that the President of the United States had signified his willingness to accept the honorary chairmanship.

The fourth and last address of the afternoon session was delivered by Prof. C. M. Jansky, Jr., of the University of Minnesota. Prof. Jansky has had very close contact with the development of radio broadcasting from its beginning and particularly the broadcasting of agricultural information. He has been in charge of the radio engineering work of the University of Minnesota and has maintained a radio station at the University for a number of years. It was his station which began the radio telephone broadcasting of market reports in the United States in February, 1921.

Minneapolis and St. Paul are at the gateway of one of the great grain producing sections of the United States. In Minneapolis are located the country's largest flour mills, and the college of agriculture is nearby. Those interested in radio broadcasting at the University have hoped to see a powerful station located in the Twin Cities to serve the farming interests of the Great Northwest. Cutting & Washington Company, an electrical concern, for some time maintained a radio station in Minneapolis with the help of some of the business interests and of the Northwest Farmstead. Crop and market reports from the branch office of the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics were broadcast, together with such other information as was prepared by the agricultural paper. Owing to the lack of financial support this station was discontinued, and the needs of the Northwest might have suffered had it not been for the development of a plan by which the business interests of Minneapolis and St. Paul and the colleges of agriculture and engineering of the University, together with the financial assistance of the Washburn-Crosby Milling Company, have made possible the erection and maintenance of a powerful station.

Professor Jansky's address was to a certain extent of a technical nature in that it discussed the problem of the Northwest due to the present method of allocating wave lengths. Aside from this point, Professor Jansky said that to his mind, "the most pressing problem in the radio broadcasting field today is undoubtedly the question as to what agencies will ultimately control broadcasting stations and who will pay for broadcasting." He went on to say that payment by the listener is of rather remote consideration due to the distance between the broadcaster and listener, but that the listener does control the type of material which is broadcast because the broadcasting stations are quick to respond to the wishes of the public.

Following Professor Jansky's paper, the chairman stated that the prepared program had been completed and asked those in attendance what further action they cared to take. It was moved that a committee be appointed to summarize the outstanding points in the addresses and discussions of the day. The committee appointed consisted of the following:

- A. R. Clark, Chief, Bureau of Markets, New Jersey, Chairman.
- N. J. Holmberg, Commissioner of Agriculture, St. Paul, Minn.
- Edgar L. Bill, Sears-Roebuck Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
- E. B. Calvert, Chief of Forecast Division, Weather Bureau,
Washington, D. C.
- H. Umberger, Kansas Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kan.
- William Murphy, Kansas City Board of Trade, Kansas City, Mo.
- J. Clyde Marquis, Director of Information, Bureau of Agricultural
Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D. C.

After the appointment of this committee, Mr. Horne of the Westinghouse Company stated that in his opinion the conference would have been largely in vain if some sort of machinery were not put in motion to coordinate the relationships between the broadcasting stations and various sources of agricultural information, including the weather, crop and market reports. Mr. Horne said that in his opinion the agency used should be one of official standing so that its recommendations would have weight with the managers of broadcasting stations and others, and that wherever possible official sources of information be used rather than unofficial.

Mr. W. O. Lacey of the American Farm Bureau Federation spoke in favor of the National Farm Radio Council which had been discussed by Mr. Kibler earlier in the afternoon.

The summarizing committee met immediately upon the adjournment of the afternoon session to prepare its report for presentation at the evening session. When the conference was again called to order at 8 p.m., the Chairman called on Mr. Clark for the report of the committee. The report was read by Mr. J. Clyde Marquis, secretary of the committee, as follows:

WHEREAS, the addresses and discussions of this conference on the uses of radio for the distribution of agricultural information and entertainment have shown that radio is a means of communication of paramount importance to agriculture; and

WHEREAS, it has been shown that great good is being derived by our people in rural communities, and it has been indicated that there are yet unmeasured possibilities of benefit if this new agency is properly utilized and expanded; and

WHEREAS, this meeting has shown that the mutual consideration of the many problems involved in the selection and preparation of material and arrangement and coordination of schedules, and the adaptation of programs to specific needs of particular localities offers means of solution without resort to strict regulation:

THEREFORE, Be it resolved:

1. That we declare it to be the sense of this meeting that agricultural radio broadcasting be extended as rapidly as the evidences of need justify and reliable broadcasting facilities become available, until all parts of the agricultural community are reached with a satisfactory and regular service.

2. That the attention of all broadcasting station operators be called to the vital importance of using only accurate and dependable information and to the dangers of broadcasting unauthentic information and propaganda, and that we urge that every means be employed to protect the listener from deception of all kinds.

3. That in addition^{to} the character of the material, especial attention be given to the timeliness and continuity of broadcasting periods and that all governmental agencies responsible for the direction of radio recognize the farmers' interest in timely information.

4. That we recognize the great importance of weather reports and storm warnings to all on land, sea and lakes, and approve the supervision of all broadcasting of weather information by the United States Weather Bureau.

5. That the present cooperative supervision of the broadcasting of market reports by Federal and State marketing agencies be continued to the end that the farmer be not confused by conflicting reports.

6. That we believe that there exists in the Federal and State extension services an agency for correlating the educational material distributed by radio and we recommend that these agencies take steps to study the farmers' needs and desires as to the character and kind of material and the relative proportions thereof, and to assist broadcasting stations to discover the best programs of agricultural material for each locality.

7. That the consumers' interest in agriculture be recognized and that broadcasting stations in population centers be urged to give consideration to the use of suitable material on agriculture to promote a better understanding of the farm situation and also aid the consumer to buy farm products in season and to the best advantage.

8. That this conference urge the United States Department of Agriculture, the State departments of agriculture and of markets, the agricultural colleges, the farm organizations, and other agencies having information of value that is suitable for distribution by radio, to prepare and distribute this news to radio stations in the same manner as they release it to the press.

9. That we hereby express our appreciation of the action of the representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture and the interest of the late Secretary of Agriculture, Henry C. Wallace, in the calling of this conference for the purpose of bringing about a better use of radio for farmers; and further, that we recommend that future conferences be called by the Secretary of Agriculture when in his judgment such conferences are desirable.

The reading of the report of the committee was followed by considerable discussion, after which the report was unanimously adopted.

Following the adoption of the report, Mr. Edgar L. Bill, of the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, presented an additional resolution as follows:

10. "That the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture be requested to use its friendly offices to promote working relations between broadcasting stations and agencies that have worthy material for agricultural broadcasting."

This resolution was seconded by Mr. Horne and, after considerable discussion, was unanimously adopted and added to the report of the committee. The conference then adjourned.

